

Huskers look for breather after Montana matchup

BY JOHN GASKINS
Staff reporter

It would be easy to understand if players on the Nebraska women's basketball team are feeling a little fatigued. After all, they've played five road games and have finals looming.

Fortunately, they've returned home for a three-game homestand and an eight-day rest. That lull between games will start after the Huskers' Sunday game against Montana, which will tip off at 7:05 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Montana will be the second game of the homestand. The first was a much-needed 108-54 victory over 0-6 Troy State on Tuesday, which Assistant Coach Brooke Meadows said couldn't have come at a better time.

"They were tired," Meadows said. "That was a good game for them and a

chance to be at home sleeping in their own beds."

Almost as comfortable as their own beds have been the confines of their home court. In the last two years under Head Coach Paul Sanderford, Nebraska has never lost in the Devaney Center, sporting a perfect 20-0 record there.



Sanderford

"I think (the streak) is very special to them," Meadows said. "We just feel very comfortable at Devaney and have an added sense of confidence there. It's definitely a motivational factor."

The Huskers certainly had the motivation to trounce the Lady Trojans on Tuesday, which was a pleasant relief from the two previous games, in which the Huskers had to gut out close victories over Drake and Creighton after trailing by more than 10 points in the

second half.

Although the team is 8-1 and ranked 19th nationally, Meadows said the players aren't celebrating or resting on their record.

"We got lucky a couple of times," Meadows said. "Coach Sanderford made the point that if the ball didn't bounce our way, we could be 6-3 just like that."

Meadows said the Huskers cannot overlook Montana, which she said is an aggressive, physical and well-coached team.

After the game, the players will get eight days off before they play North Texas at the Devaney Center on Dec. 20, which will give them a chance to take finals. Meadows said this is always a tough time of the year for the team because of the added pressure of finals with basketball.

"In practice we could be talking to them, and they could look like they're listening, but at least I know they're thinking about Spanish or math or history at the same time."

Key road game at CSU awaits NU

BY ADAM KLINKER
Staff writer

A lengthy five-game homestand and a crucial win will follow the Nebraska basketball team on its first road trip in three weeks.

The Cornhuskers went 4-1 while playing on the friendly hardwood at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, putting together a championship in their own Ameritas Classic and winning a big game against in-state rival Creighton.

Saturday NU (6-3 overall) will take to Fort Collins, Colo., in a matchup with a tough Colorado State team (6-2).

The game will be a rematch of last year's 64-57 Husker win.

Since that game, CSU has lost four starters and six lettermen from last season's team, but Husker Coach Danny Nee said the Rams should prove to be a good opponent for NU.

"They're pretty good," Nee said. "The big thing for us is that it's a road game."

Nee said rookie Head Coach Ritchie McKay and the CSU offense

"They've got a lot of guys who contribute. We're going to work on breaking down their offense and just continue to do what we've been doing on defense."

DANNY NEE
NU head coach

should follow much the same style as Wisconsin, a team the Huskers lost to, 78-41, in the Top of the World Classic.

Leading the Ram offense will be senior guard Milt Palacio, who averages 17.1 points, 4.5 assists and 5.4 rebounds per game.

Three other CSU players also average double-figure point totals for the Rams - forward Cedric Goodwyn (11 ppg), guard Andre McKanstry (11 ppg) and guard John Sivesind (10 ppg).

"They've got a lot of guys who contribute," Nee said. "We're going to work on breaking down their offense and just continue to do what we've been doing on defense."

CSU is coming off a 43-40 loss at South Alabama on Wednesday that

ended a five-game winning streak over which the Rams averaged 70 points against such teams as Oregon State, Eastern Michigan and Utah State, a team that owns a 62-54 win over then-No. 12 Utah.

To add to the prospect of going on the road, NU is also coming off a 76-60 dusting of Creighton, one of the better teams the Huskers have faced this season.

Nee said maintaining the focus that the Huskers had against CU will be a big factor if NU is to do well against the Rams.

"Our ability to handle success and be humble is something we have always done," he said. "We know that there are so many big games. We've got to be ready to do this 25 times during the season."

NU dual sees ex-teammates battle

BY LISA VONNAHME
Staff writer

When heavyweight J.R. Plienis steps onto the wrestling mat Sunday,

he'll be looking into the eyes of another grappler he knows well - his workout partner from the last

two seasons and former NU wrestler, Abe Boomer.

Only this year, after a transfer, Boomer will be wearing the gold and brown of Wyoming rather than the red and white of Nebraska.

"This match should be a big advantage for me," Plienis said. "After working out with a guy for two years you get to know everything he does. I know how Abe wrestles."

Plienis and the rest of the No. 14 Cornhusker squad will take on Boomer and the unranked Cowboys in NU's first home dual of the season at 2 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

A sophomore from Edgemere, Md., Plienis is eager to face his former teammate but admits the match will be a little "weird."

"We'll be going against each other," Plienis said. "But I think I can beat him. I've improved a lot from last year, and I don't believe he's in the same atmosphere as I am."

Plienis had a chance to watch Boomer compete as a Cowboy at the Omaha Open on Nov. 21. He saw Boomer had "basically the same style" as he did when Plienis wrestled him in practice.

"There aren't any new moves or anything that should surprise me," Plienis said. "As far as I go, my tech-

nique on my feet has improved."

But for the squad as a whole, technique on the top and bottom positions has been the focus in practice this week, Nebraska Coach Tim Neumann said.

Neumann was disappointed in those areas last weekend against Penn State and has been pushing the NU grapplers hard, stressing the importance of constant improvement.

"We always want to be better than what we were the week before," Neumann said. "Wyoming wrestles on the top, and they use cradles more than what we're used to."

While the Huskers might not be used to cradles, Plienis is used to Boomer and is expecting an NU win at heavyweight on Sunday.

"We use the same philosophy for each meet," Plienis said. "We look to win 10 of 10 matches."

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